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SUBJECT: TRIPARTITE PLUS MEETING READ-OUT

11. (SBU) Summary: The Tripartite Plus meeting in Kampala from September 15-17 followed several significant bilateral meetings between member states. Progress on action against the negative forces remained slow, but the Democratic Republic of Congo and MONUC presented the outlines of their plans to deal with the negative forces. Uganda's insistence on placing the names of the People's Redemption Army (PRA) on the Common Most Wanted List continued to block progress on development of a fully approved list. Representatives from Rwanda and the DRC engaged in a heated exchange of accusations regarding support for the negative forces, but agreed to revitalize the Joint Verification Commission to check into assurances given by both sides. Burundi will host the next Tripartite Plus meeting at a date to be determined during the last two weeks of February 2008. End Summary.

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OVERVIEW
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12. (SBU) Deputy Assistant Secretary Jim Swan briefed members of the diplomatic community on September 17 on the proceedings and outcomes of the Tripartite Plus Commission held in Kampala from September 15-17. Ambassadors Browning and Leader and Senior Special Advisor Tim Shortley joined him. DAS Swan noted that since the beginning of the Tripartite Plus process in October 2004, dialogue between the member states had substantially increased and qualitatively improved. In particular, recent meetings between senior officials of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda and Uganda have helped reduce tensions and further discussions on important security issues at the bilateral level. Nonetheless, member states appear frustrated on the pace of progress on removing negative forces and were particularly disappointed in MONUC's slow progress on addressing these threat. With the exception of a brief heated exchange between Congolese Ambassador Nwegje and Rwandan Ambassador Sezibera, the tenor of the discussions in Kampala was civil.

13. (SBU) There will be several issues requiring follow-up in the coming months. On September 25, the Chiefs of Defense Staff meeting will focus on making the CHODS planning cell operational and convert Joint Planning Cell recommendations into action. The Congolese will present a detailed briefing in Kisangani on the combined planning between the Congolese armed forces and MONUC. The meeting to launch the Joint Planning Cell was set to take place in Kisangani on September 120. Congo and Rwanda agreed to convene a Joint Verification Commission to meet on September 21 in Goma. Legal teams will meet in Bukavu from October 29-31. The Foreign Ministers signed a letter to U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon regarding MONUC's role and mandate to engage the negative forces. They will request a meeting with the UNSG to present the letter during the U.N. General Assembly meetings. The member states agreed to formalize diplomatic relations with

each other by September 2008. Uganda and Congo agreed to ratify the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region Pact by the end of December 2007. An evaluation of the Tripartite Plus process will convene in Goma on November 1 to discuss gaps. Participants will identify elements of agreements not implemented and produce detailed action plans for implementation.

RWANDA-CONGO EXCHANGE

¶4. (SBU) There was consensus and concern among Tripartite Plus countries that the security environment in eastern Congo had deteriorated since the last meeting in June. Congo expressed concern with the role of ex-General Laurent Nkunda in contributing to the destabilization. Rwanda was concerned about increased re-armament and military activity of ex-FAR-Interahamwe in eastern Congo. A heated discussion between Congo and Rwanda occurred between Ambassadors Seraphin Ngwej and Richard Sezibera over these issues. Ngwej accused Rwanda of supporting dissident General Laurent Nkunda. Sezibera accused the Congolese army of collaborating with the FDLR to attack Nkunda. The exchange was direct. Congo demanded an apology from Rwanda; Rwanda refused to apologize. Congo went on the record to state that its forces were not collaborating with the FDLR. Rwanda stated that it was not supporting Nkunda. Rwanda stated that Nkunda was a Congolese matter to be dealt with by Congo as a sovereign matter. Rwanda had its own views on the validity of Nkunda's claims, but said it would respect whatever Congo wanted to do to deal with Nkunda. Rwandan Foreign Minister Murigande repeated this viewpoint at the press conference. Congo and Rwanda decided to revitalize the Joint Verification Commission to verify the assurances given by both

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governments. The JVC would convene on September 21.

COMMON MOST WANTED LIST

¶5. (SBU) The People's Redemption Army (PRA) issue continued to frustrate efforts to agree on a Common Most Wanted List. Uganda refused proposals to put forward the names of individuals that had no objections on the list. Rwanda argued that the PRA is not a meaningful threat to Uganda. All technical attempts to deal with the PRA issue failed. Rwanda suggested the dropping of the Common Most Wanted List altogether, arguing that the negative forces and their leaders were known in the region. DAS Swan said that it appeared that a high level political discussion was needed to overcome the blockage.

ACTION AGAINST NEGATIVE FORCES

¶6. (SBU) Member states were eager for action against the negative forces. Congo introduced its plan to deal with the negative forces. The plan was based on the need to move forward with "brassage" as a means to strengthen the capacity of the Congolese armed forces. Brassage could be completed in March or April 2007. Congo clarified that completion of brassage was not a prerequisite for taking action against the negative forces. Some action could be taken with newly integrated units after they receive training. There was consensus on continuing the Tripartite Plus framework because it provided for frequent focus on the negative forces and regular U.S. involvement.

COMMENT

17. (SBU) The atmospherics of the meeting were good and a number of follow-up activities were scheduled. The next Tripartite Plus meeting will be held in Bujumbura, Burundi during the last two weeks of February 2008.

BROWNING